



PRESS RELEASE



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‘IF YOU'RE GOOD AT MOTORBIKE RACING, YOU CAN COME AND DO THE MANX GRAND PRIX’ - MEET MGP PODIUM FINISHER GRAHAM MCALEESE

ONE RIDER AT THE 2026 MANX GRAND PRIX WHO SHOWED IMPRESSIVE PACE IN THE FIRST TWO RACES IS GRAHAM MCALEESE.

The 28-year-old from Limavady is competing in his fourth Manx and so far this week has achieved a second place finish in the Glover Law Supersport race and in the same race recorded a 120mph lap.

Graham sat down with us to discuss his career to date and his goals for the future.

How long you've been racing for?

"I started racing in 2019, first road race was 2021 Armoy, and then just sort of progressed to here.

"Never really had here as an insight. I wanted to do Northwest 200, it's my local race back at home, and I didn't get in there to put an entry in for it one year, and the fellow at home said, 'Why don't you try the Manx?'.

"I came over here, and I fell in love with the place.

"That was that was it.

"Then it actually helped me get accreditation I needed to do the Northwest.

"So that sort of killed two birds with one stone."

When was your first Manx?

"Four years ago, 2023.

"It was the hundredth year.

"It was nice to be actually a part of it in 2023, part of the 100 years.

"I knew sort of my first year I'd done 98 mile an hour or something on the twin and 103 [on the 600], and we thought sort of slow start, like it wasn't really, wasn't really maybe for me.

"But we come back and just that natural steady progression every year, and it seems to be, I mean, you keep going.

You said after your second place in the Supersport race that a lap of 120mph is the sign to look at the TT, you achieved that feat so is the TT the next step?

"I would like to.

"We sort of had the TT in mind, but it was more to just experience the TT. I'm

"I don't think it'll be a longevity thing.

"I would like to do it as long as I can, but it's a big financial thing, and bike-wise, and people off work for longer and stuff like that there.

"So the help would need to be there, the team would need to be there.

"I wouldn't rule it out, I would love to do it, as I say, I would love to experience it, but maybe another year at the Manx or something like that there.

"We'll sort of see, we'll see how Monday goes.

"I think if you can keep doing them 120-mile-an-hour laps, you'd need to move into TT and maybe progress, you know what I mean? But as I say just all in a minute."

Who are you riding with this year?

"I have my own R6 which is looked after by Michael Dunlop.

"He builds it and looks after it every year.

"Sort of gives me a helping hand and advice whenever I need it, which is good to have him in your corner.

"FAO owns the twin and we have sort of not signed anything yet but sort of said that next year is ago-ahead if everything works out towards the end of the year.

"I don't see why we need to be looking for anything else.

"They're talking about a next-gensupersport bike and maybe even a big bike, so we'll see what we can come up with in the winter and get plans in place.

What is it like having someone like Michael Dunlop in your camp helping you?

"It's not really for learning the track.

"He's obviously going a whole lot quicker and he doesn't want to push me into places that I'm not ready for, which is kind of a good thing too.

"He understands, he's not going to tell you to go flat out through here if you're not ready to go flat out through here, which is good.

"But he understands what a 120-mile-an-hour lap is, he understands what's needed to do it, what commitment is needed to do it, fitness-wise, bike preparation, everything I got there, which all stands to this day."

How does a circuit like this compare to the Northwest?

"The Northwest is nothing compared to here.

"It's local to me, that's why I love it.

"I love the event, I love the family orientation of it, I love being around the event.

"I've been to the Northwest ever since I was a kid, you know what I mean?

"I come here with friends to watch the TT, but again, it wasn't never to maybe do here.

"You know what I mean? It was still a big financial thing.

"But the difference is immense, like either nine miles the northwest.

"This is thirty-seven mile, it's mental and you get everything here.

"You get the laps now you're coming and it is a wee bit shorter.

"You're starting to piece it more together.

"Whereas the Northwest, it maybe comes a wee bit easier because you know the roads, you've been going around in your whole life, you know, it comes easier to me.

"But I like that international status, I like racing with the best in the world, you know, and that's why I like here too.

"Anybody, if you're good at motorbike racing, you can come and do the Manx Grand Prix.

"Nothing's stopping you, so to be second yesterday against Johnny, it was immense.

"Like, it could have been anybody, you know what I mean? And me and Johnny are great friends and I made the icing on the cake yesterday when it was him and me.

What do your family think of you competing here?

"Yeah, my dad, he drives to the race or whatever.

"I don't have a license, so I need him to come.

"My fiance now, Sarah, she's been backing me ever since we started seeing each other when I was racing, so that kind of I'm doing this now, which kind of helps.

"She's been supportive of it ever since the start.

"Her family's very much supportive too.

"My mum, she doesn't want to be involved in it.

"She listens at the house and stuff like that there.

"My uncle's my main mechanic, like so it's all it's all family, it's all family oriented."

What do you think of the Manx Grand Prix as a whole?

"It's on time, everything's dotted, i's dotted, t's are crossed.

"It's great, everybody's friendly.

"I like it because there's nothing you can't sort.

"If you have a problem, there's a facility for this, or there's a facility for that, there's personnel for that.

"It's great, it's a proper run event."

Graham will be in action today in the Carole Nash Junior and Okell's Senior races.

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